My Philosophy

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Chapter I

Introduction to Empirical Logic

If you have a barrel of 10,000 ping-pong balls and you want to know what the overall color composition is of the balls in the barrel, and you don't have the time or means to look at every one of them, you can infer the composition by randomly sampling a percentage of the balls from the barrel, inspecting those samples directly, and considering that sample lot as representative of the whole barrel. The higher the ratio of samples-taken:whole-barrel, the more secure your inference is. This is an inductive inference.

If you're able to sample balls from anywhere in the barrel, and you pick out 100 balls from randomly different places in the barrel, and see that 50 are red and 50 are white, you can infer with a significantly greater security than 1/100 (100/10,000) that the composition of balls in the barrel is pretty close to 50:50 of red:white.

If you're only able to sample balls from the top half of the barrel, say, because your arm isn't long enough to reach the lower half, and you pull out 50 red and 50 white balls randomly from within your reach, and if you want those balls to represent the composition of the whole barrel, you are logically required to weigh all 100 samples as one single sample. One sample from a collection of more than one has the weight equivalent of a mere hypothesis, i.e., a guess. The security of your inference is 1/the-number-of-possible-color-combinations, in other words, near zero.

The reason all non-randomly-picked samples must be weighed as only one sample is because, in this case for example, for all you know the bottom half of the barrel was filled with a separate batch than the top half, and they were blue. Random sampling protects you from being wrong about any assumption about how the whole was supplied or organized.

If you have a barrel of only two balls and you sample one, and it's red, you then know the color composition of the barrel is at least 50% red but you know nothing of the other 50% except that it's some color. You can only guess if it's white, blue, clear, etc. Here, your security of knowledge of the color composition of the whole barrel is 1/the-number-of-possible-colors.

But, in that second case of the 10,000 balls where your arm was too short, while you are not logically warranted to have any confidence in an inference about the color

composition of the whole barrel, you are logically warranted to have some confidence in an inference that the top half of the barrel is 50:50 of red:white.

If you have pertinent information from a source outside of the barrel, then you might be able to use that information to increase the security of your inference. E.g., if you know that the balls will be for sale on the market and that the greatest demand is for white balls, then your inference that the lower half of the barrel contains white balls might have a greater security than a random guess. Whether it will actually increase your security or not depends on how randomly you sampled from the pool* of all possible outside factors or not; how much it will increase your security depends how large your ratio of random-samples:whole is. If all you know about the relevant outside world is that there is at least this one possible factor, then all you can do is guess whether it's outweighed by other opposing factors or not. If you're able to sample from the whole outside-world of possible relevant factors, then you can make an inductive inference about that outside world, the result of which can be added to your initial inference of the composition of the barrel. You'll need to take random samples from this outside-world, judge** each sample for whether it actually influenced the composition of the barrel or not, then consider, with the appropriate level of security, that lot of samples as representative of the whole world of relevant factors. Adjust your inference about the barrel accordingly.

* You might think that because everything affects every other thing (directly or indirectly), and because there are infinite ways to analyze the world, and hence there are an infinite number of things which affect the immediate thing that you're examining, that it's impossible to draw an inductive inference with any security about anything, (as n/infinity=0.) It is possible, for the following reason. It's not true that the importance of every thing's effect on your thing is equal; there are diminishing returns. And, it must be —lest induction, and the meaning of anything, is an illusion—that the sum of the weight of (the importance of) the infinity of affecting things is finite: this is analogous to the fact that an infinite number of half-distances of a given distance has a finite sum which is the given distance.

** Your judgment, here as with all judgments, will also be an inductive inference. (Cf., John Venn, The Principles of Empirical or Inductive Logic, chapter V.) It may seem that you have no ground for any inference when each one is based on an infinity of layers of inferences upon inferences. But, as long as that infinity has a finite sum, you are on solid ground. Your ground is the coherent whole of the universe.

When taking samples for an inductive test of a hypothesis, you should be careful not to give too much weight to the samples taken from your memory of experiences from prior to the making of your hypothesis. They may not have been taken randomly from the real

world, and in many cases you don't remember all of your past relevant experiences, but, often, only experiences toward which you're biased. E.g., your hypothesis is "75% of people's childhood experiences is of having fun." You likely have not sampled randomly from the whole world of children; maybe you have a bias toward noticing fun over not-fun events; and you may not have remembered as many of the not-fun experiences in your own childhood. Give much more weight to the samples taken after you formed the hypothesis that you're testing, because for many cases, most people, if not all, will judge these samples with less of a bias. For samples drawn from your memory of experiences which happened before your hypothesis, do your best to discount their value by as much as you honestly assess the selecting of them to have not approximated randomness.

Lastly, you can't make an inductive inference of an infinite set that has any security at all. It's impossible to randomly sample from an infinite set, so with all your non-random samples weighed cumulatively as one, your security will be zero, as 1/infinity=0, besides the fact that n/infinity=0. For example, you don't know that anything will or will not change somewhere in the infinite future; you don't know if it or anything else will even exist, or not exist, in cases of physical objects, or whether a law of nature that's relevant and applicable now will have any relevant application later. So, you can't make an inductive inference about the eternal character of something, e.g., the law of gravity, the existence of matter, God's character. You can, of course, in certain cases, make a deductive inference, e.g., in an infinite set of even numbers you can deduce the fact that any number you pick, no matter how high, is even.

Way too often, I see smart people overestimating the security of their inference, acting as if they (1) sampled randomly from the whole area of which they're making their inference, when they didn't randomly sample or honestly approximate randomness, (2) sampled from the whole area of which they're making their inference, when they only sampled from a determined subset, and/or (3) assumed their access to relevant outside information is comprehensive, when it isn't.

You may ask, "How, then, do we know the sun will rise tomorrow? Isn't the future similar to the bottom half of the barrel in that it's out of our observational reach and so we can't take samples from there?" The answer is that we don't know that the sun will rise tomorrow anymore than scientists knew that a stone won’t fall from the sky tomorrow. As recently as the late 18th century scientists thought they knew that stones don't fall from the sky because day after day, year after year, their observations showed no signs of such stones. However, we infer the future sun's rising from more than just its past regularity: we also deduce it from the assumed premise that the forces that make the sun rise regularly, and the laws that regulate the forces, are stable enough (relative to all the other laws and forces that work toward stopping the rising) for its cycle to continue into the foreseeable future. But here, again, all we know about these stable forces is that

they've been stable in the past; we can't sample from their future states, so we know nothing about their future. We don't know that there aren't other forces out there that will stop the sun from rising before tomorrow, e.g., maybe there's something, currently too far away to detect, heading towards the Earth at an immense speed, which will obliterate the Earth tonight and thus eliminate tomorrow morning. We can only guess what's outside of our observational reach. However, if we had access to all areas of the universe, and took random samples from the whole universe for possible causes of catastrophe to our Earth or sun then, given the continuance of the law of conservation of energy, we could know with some degree of security that the sun will or won't rise again. That security would be contingent on the continuance of the law of conservation of energy; and just because energy has so far always been conserved doesn’t mean it always will be conserved. We, so far, haven't had full access to the universe, so every belief in the past that the sun will rise the next day was a guess on par with the belief that a meteor won't land in my backyard this year.

Chapter II

Intellectual Integrity, Defined

Intellectual integrity has three components. One of them is the willingness of a person to admit that the object of his belief might not be true, if it's brought to his attention that he has not sufficiently tested the object's veracity. Another component is the believer's willingness to then better test the truth of the object of his belief when doing so doesn't take an unreasonable amount of effort relative to (a) what he should reasonably understand as the consequence of being wrong plus (b) the reasonably-assessed probability that he is wrong. Those two components have the prerequisite of being sufficiently open to information that's contrary to one's belief in order for that information to merely catch one's attention.

Put conversely and starting with the prerequisite, (1) if the believer is so unamenable to information about his possibly being mistaken that he can't see this information when it's is right in front of him, then he lacks the character or intelligence to have intellectual integrity. For example, a person's belief might foster such a strong drive toward a goal that he is unable to take notice of anything that is counter-useful for achieving that goal. Say, his belief is that he is a morally good man; his goal is to provide for his family; his drive toward that goal delivers his goal in spades; and, in his relentless drive toward his goal, he can't see that his job as a corporate con-man has consequences that contradict his belief, because deep down he doesn't want to know about them. (2) If the believer sees information showing the weakness of the justification for his belief, and he's unwilling to admit that he might be wrong, then he lacks intellectual integrity. (3) If he does admit he might be wrong, and he still holds the belief, but he's unwilling to look any further into it when, (a) his getting this right is important, and (b) that effort is relatively easy, then he lacks intellectual integrity—and, the higher the consequences of being wrong, the more he lacks.

So far that's only the aspect of intellectual integrity that regards the ability to see and admit a probability of fault and pursue the further testing if it's reasonable to do so. If I were to follow the idea of C. S. Peirce, that "Thought in action has for its only possible motive the attainment of thought at rest," (CP 5.396) I would leave it at that. ("Thought at rest" is 'belief' which is a habit of thinking a certain way.) But, I disagree with Peirce's idea and think that another motive of thought is the invigoration of the spirit via thought. Thought is more than problem solving; it also creates new areas of knowledge purely for the joy of creating; and since we are naturally creative beings we should think this way if we have the opportunity.

Given this other motive of thought, I'm inclined to add this: intellectual integrity also entails the person's willingness to expand his knowledge, no matter how slowly he might want that expansion to happen. Expansion of knowledge is done by making new hypotheses, with new or old data, and then testing the new hypotheses. A person who doesn't avoid mental torpor lacks intellectual integrity.

Being right is not a necessary condition for having intellectual integrity; and being wrong is not a necessary condition for lacking intellectual integrity. Sometimes people who lack intellectual integrity get things right; sometimes people with intellectual integrity make honest mistakes.

A person's holding of passively-attained beliefs that are wrong does not mean that person lacks intellectual integrity. Everyone holds more passively-attained beliefs than they can possibly test; e.g., most people who believe that Mars's orbit of the Sun is an ellipse have not checked out the astronomers' observational data, mathematics, and logic—they just believe the conclusion inferred by the scientific consensus. Sometimes the consensus is wrong, like when it approved the liberal use of DDT as a pesticide and said it was perfectly safe for humans. Most people merely assumed that the scientific community did its due diligence and that it consisted of mostly honest and moral people. And, as far as intellectual integrity is concerned, that assumption is OK. Following what you believe is the scientific consensus, following your peers, following authority figures, sticking with tradition, sticking with your first notions—none of that, by itself, is a knock against your intellectual integrity. What matters is how you react to information that's contrary to your belief, and that you don't slip into a mental torpor.

Chapter III

Particulars and Universals, a Classic Problem. What Determines or Guides Synthesis and Analysis?

§1. The Question of What Determines or Guides Synthesis and Analysis.

A particular is an object that is distinct from anything else. A universal is a class or type. A particular is an individual physical thing or a mental representation of an individual thing as an individual thing. For an example of a particular as a mental representation, imagine three circles, each of different size. Each different circle is a particular circle. For a physical example, on the page that you're reading, this particular letter I is different from every other letter I but it is still classified as an I. Each different I is in a different place, which is enough to show that each one is different from the others, but also, when measured extremely accurately each I is different in height, width, thickness, and darkness from the others. They are similar, but it takes a judgment to decide what things are similar enough to belong to a category. Imagine 1000 consecutive I's each one mutated a little bit more than the previous. Where do you draw the line between what is an I and what isn't? How should you judge?

Are some judgments artificial, like the identification of a student in a classroom as being first in alphabetical order, and some judgments natural, like the identification of a tree as a tree?

Without the universal there would be no reason to see the parts of a particular as making a whole. For example, take this dotted i. It could only be due to the universal that we know the dot above the vertical line is a part of the letter. Also, without the universal there would be no reason to see the sum of the parts, making a particular whole, as distinct from its surroundings. For example, take this dotted i. It could only be due to the universal that we know the dot after the line, the period, isn't a part of the letter. Likewise with all things, the understanding of any group of parts as isolated from within your field of vision (and/or touch, taste, smell, hearing) and forming an entity is due to the universal. This is true no matter how close in proximity or how strong the force bonding the parts. "Close" and "strong" are relative terms, so, when the closeness of parts or the strength of their bond is relevant, it takes a judgment to decide how close is close enough and how strong is strong enough; and then parts can be considered as belonging to a unit for reasons other than their closeness or strength of the force bonding them, e.g., the center point of a circle may be farther from the line making the circle than a square drawn inside the circle and next to the center-point, yet we know the point belongs to the circle and the square doesn't. For a physical example, take one leg of a

wooden chair which is standing on a wooden floor. To people, the top half of that leg and the lower half of that leg make a single unit called “chair leg.” To a termite, the wood making a part of the floor and the lower part of the leg are a unit, which he would call “a good meal” if he could speak. Each species has a different natural way to analyze and synthesize his sense data. You can understand the termite’s judgment, but the termite can’t understand yours. Now, imagine a being whose intelligence is as advanced from a human’s as a human’s intelligence is to a termite’s. He very well might have a radically different way of analyzing and synthesizing his sense data. He might synthesize several elements in a way that we would see as arbitrary. In fact—due to the psychological fact that slight anomalies within our sense data are, for the most part, not recognized—we might not even be able to recognize those elements, especially if each of those elements was due to a strange synthesis of even smaller elements. His whole arrangement of the world would be completely alien to our way of thinking.

The idea that particulars stand on their own is problematic because, except for a mathematical point, every particular can be divided into parts, and parts are wholes made of smaller parts, which are again wholes of even smaller parts. Since this process continues infinitely, and since combining parts is due to judgments, there can be no concept of an "ultimate particular" which grounds physical reality, i.e., there can be no concept of a part that isn't due to a universal. No matter how small the part it is still composed of a group of smaller parts, and for us to cognize a whole we have to rely on the universal. Subdivisions of a line, area, or space are endless; they do not end with a mathematical point, but they home in asymptotically toward a point. The idea of a point is held in our minds, not by synthesizing its parts, obviously, but by its function of dividing a line or many lines. A point is therefore a mental construct devised to serve a mental function; it has no meaning outside of its being a member of the class of points. You only recognize any individual thing because of its type. (‘Type’ is another term for ‘class’.) Without an understanding of its type, a point, or anything else, is not only unrecognizable, but utterly meaningless, and therefore inconceivable. A so-called ‘unique object’ is still a type of object, i.e., it belongs to the class of all objects. How then do you recognize the uniqueness of something, e.g., the uniqueness of a person’s physical appearance, except by recognizing the particular? Something’s uniqueness is due to it being a unique combination of non-unique types.

Is the particular’s dependence on the universal a problem for its existence? Is the universal’s dependence on particulars—if, in fact, the universal’s raison d’être is to synthesize and analyze the world of particulars—a problem for its being? Perhaps the answer is that universals are the primary elements of reality, and particulars are really subdivisions of universals; thought is the primary mode of reality, and the physical world is really a special case of the mental world, (similarly to how, in the relativity of motion, standing still is a special case of motion.)

This classic problem of universals requires this or that postulate to solve. The debate among informed and honest philosophers is over which postulate or set of postulates to accept. Every philosophy rests on a set of postulates.

A truth is a potential or actual idea about any segment of reality, or about the whole of reality, that has potential to successfully guide the mental or physical actions of the one who believes it—actions, specifically, that are in regard to the segment or whole of reality to which the idea pertains.

Is that which is rightly recognized as true by one being, true for all beings, without regard for how alien that truth is to the other beings' psychology?

§2. Different Approaches to the Question.

Similarly to the alien's world being practically impossible for us to comprehend, it's possible that over trillions of years we evolve to a point where our new way of making fundamental judgments of our world will become practically incommensurable with the old way of trillions of years prior. That will be the case if, over time, changes in our way of analyzing and synthesizing the universe outrun advances in our ability to inquire into our past ways of thinking. This is what Joseph Margolis means when he speaks of history passing over the horizon.

Is truth a matter of what is practically possible to learn, or is it a matter of what is theoretically possible to learn? Charles Peirce defined truth as that opinion "which would ultimately prevail if investigation were carried sufficiently far in that particular direction."* Truth, for Peirce, is what would be known at the theoretical infinite limit of inquiry. Joseph Margolis built his philosophy on the importance of practical possibilities, and as such he says some past truths can't be learned: the very ability to bring them to mind has passed over the horizon, so they're not ideas at all. Only ideas that can actually be held in a mind can be given an alethic value. For Margolis, truth is a practically attainable belief about reality that's relevant, apt, and useful relative to all other truths (defined the same way) within a historical frame of reference. (I explain this further, later on in this chapter where I talk about "robust relativism.") Because a practical limit prohibits us from tying up all loose ends, his definition of 'truth' is vaguer and more informal.

* http://www.commens.org/dictionary/term/truth

(Peirce's idea is compatible with Luke 8:17: "For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open."

Margolis's idea is compatible with Isaiah 65:17: "See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.")

Some philosophers say that a creature's natural analysis-and-synthesis is that which is relative to its embodiment and needs. So, they say, embodiment is the natural, and therefore true foundation for judgments which are the foundation of logic. But, that just begs the question of how embodiment and needs (which must refer to their universals) are natural rather than arbitrary judgments. What logical argument could possibly justify the belief that any human, fundamental judgment came to being because the coercion of nature made it inevitable or probable rather than because it was arbitrarily stumbled on and chosen? Or what logical argument could possibly justify the belief that every judgement is arbitrary? Most people assume the former; Buddhism and Vedanta teach the latter; but the argument is moot. You can make your default position, or your starting position, align with your bodily instinct, but this instinct is not a logical foundation per se, but rather, it's merely the habit of a species based on how things have been. Mosquitoes have an instinct to fly towards blue light, and that instinct served them well for millennia, but with the invention of blue-light bug-zappers, that instinct is a clear example of an instinct sometimes being illogical. Aligning your fundamental judgments with bodily instinct is logical only when you've sampled the universe for the possible forces of change to the conditions which formed your instincts and then inferred that your instincts will continue to serve you well. Of course, these samples of the universe can't be based solely on your instinctual ways of analysis and synthesis; you must learn to see beyond your instincts. However, it's impossible to see beyond all our instincts. All we can hope for is to conceptually reach out toward what is less instinctual, and hope that this reaching, by humans, causes us to evolve toward being more and more capable of seeing the universe of possibilities.

One long-standing way of classifying philosophies is into the classes, realism and nominalism. Realist philosophies are philosophies that say that there are real universals, real predicates, e.g., the hotness of fire is, in reality, hot, moreover, there really is a fire-ness of fire (i.e., all the necessary predicates to identify a fire as a fire are really in a fire). The term, real, means that the truth of a universal has standing independently of actual beliefs about it. (I say "actual" because C. S. Peirce's form of realism depicts universals as being dependent on belief at the theoretical, infinite limit of inquiry, but not short of that.) Realism is the opposite of nominalism. Nominalist philosophies are philosophies that say that universals are true in name only, i.e., that objects have no truth on their own, that universals only have standing because they were constructed and agreed upon by minds, like the letter i. For another example, imagine that a group of people constructed in their minds the idea that the Earth has a second moon, which resides in the space a short distance to the left of the first moon; and they talk and act as if it has a reality equal in standing to the first moon. "Both moons are equally contrived," they say.

Nominalists say that there are not just some non-real things mentally plugged into an otherwise real world, as realists think, but rather, they say that everything that's thought about is equally non-real. Nominalists admit that the coherence of their own argument against realism is non-real. They say that the mindness of minds is non-real. Their main problem, as I see it, is this: if there were nothing forcing or guiding truth, there could be no possibility for agreement on anything—every person would live in his own world built in his own mind—no, it's worse!, a person couldn't even have agreements in his own thoughts—there could be no thought at all! However, so-called "nominalists" have been good at challenging realists to come up with better explanations for realism.

Conventionalist philosophies are built on the postulate that our most fundamental universals, facts, are ideas that came to be because of an agreement of (actual, and therefore a finite number of) minds. A mind is an agreement and an agreement is a mind. Mind/Agreement is primordial and all further universals, e.g., the physical world or any part therein, is wholly due to an agreement of minds, and so agreement itself is the foundation of logic. To conventionalists, all truths are conventional, like the meaning of the dot above the i and the dot after it, the period, in the example above. They say that agreement on the sun's warmth may be embedded in our embodiment, but our embodiment is an agreement, or the consequence of more fundamental agreements, that is only possible because it's built on even more ancient agreements which got established very early in the evolution of the universe (mind-verse). The universe must be infinitely old; to think otherwise is to think that there was an initial agreement which is utterly inexplicable*. Conventionalists agree that the truth of x is what is the most coherent and elegant statement about x, as compared with all possible competing statements, that comports with our most deeply rooted agreements about facts that support x.**

* Regarding inexplicableness in general, Peirce, in the Collected Papers, 8.168, wrote, "Many are beginning to feel that the only possible justification for a hypothesis is that it renders the facts comprehensible, and that to suppose them absolutely incomprehensible (which is what the doctrine of the Unknowable comes to) is not rendering them comprehensible."

** The object, x, can be physical like a rock, or purely theoretical like a perfect square in euclidean space, which doesn't exist in nature but nonetheless is subject to objective laws like being perfectly symmetrical and having internal angles that sum to 360°, i.e., the same as a circle. Just because this perfect square is a purely theoretical object, and therefore mental, doesn't mean you can correctly say that it's asymmetrical or that it has angles that sum to more degrees than a circle. Conventionalists would say that the idea of a 400° square with a 360° circle merely violates more fundamental agreements which make up the foundation of geometry.

Robust Relativists say that a truth in our current historical frame of reference—what's within our horizons, conceptually—is true because of its relation to our historical frame of reference, and it does not necessarily hold in another historical frame of reference. Every truth is true only because it is supported by enough of the truths in its historical frame of reference and is harmonious with all the truths in its frame of reference. Because everything changes, the supporting truths in one historical frame are liable to become irrelevant in a future frame, making the truth which was supported by them not true, although not false either because it will not be an idea at all. Truth, being more of a practical matter than a formal matter, is a belief about reality that's relevant, apt, and useful relative to all other truths (defined the same way) within a historical frame of reference. The relativist's statement, "It is true that there is no universally objective truth," is not necessarily self-defeating, as so many people think, because his statement can be restated as this: "It is relevant, apt, and useful to believe, in our historical frame of reference, that there is no belief that is relevant, apt, and useful in all historical frames of reference." That is not a self-defeating statement if, and only if, the frames of reference referred to are incommensurable. What's true in one frame of reference, let's call it "truth-1-in-frame-A" will never become false and will nowhere be false. Rather, in an incommensurable historical-frame-of-reference, frame-B, 'truth-1-in-frame-A' will not exist as a statement that could possibly occur to anyone. An inconceivable proposition is not true or false because it's not a concept at all. You can't assign an alethic value to a non-concept.

Forms of relativism that assume that a truth is relative to one frame of reference but not to another frame of reference, and say that these different frames need not be incommensurable—these forms of relativism are self-defeating, because, if 'x in frame A is true' is commensurable with 'x in frame B is not true' then in the frame which makes the two frames commensurate, frame C, you'd have the contradiction, 'x is true and not true in frame C.' (The movie, Rashomon, by Akira Kurosawa, is a philosophical failure!, although, maybe it has psychological value.) If frame A and B are incommensurable then there is no frame in which a contradiction can be stated.

The only logical debate that I've seen between a realism like C. S. Peirce's, which says that objective reality is connected to thought at thought's infinite potential, and Joseph Margolis's "robust relativism", is that one is more elegant than the other. We can only wonder if someone who takes sides in the matter sees elegance or the lack thereof based merely on his subjective opinion.

I do take sides on the matter. As you'll see by the end of this whole paper, I believe, with a reason that rests on a new postulate, that regarding the nature of the universe as a whole, the most optimistic hypothesis should be preferred over a lesser optimistic hypothesis. That new postulate is that the impetus for thinking is the hope to benefit

from the thought. Hope is optimism. As far as I can see, C. S. Peirce's form of realism, with the inclusion of the new postulate, allows for infinite optimism which I can't see matched by Margolis's robust relativism.

My answer to the question, "What determines or guides synthesis and analysis?", is this: Reality, as will be understood more and more over the course of our evolving universe, is ultimately good and beautiful. Reality guides our minds toward coming into harmony with it. The specificity of that harmonious state is very open, like in music there's no creative limit on how different good compositions can be. We mostly choose the syntheses and analyses that are most harmonious with our understanding of reality. The syntheses and analyses that end up being harmonious in the long-run are true; the rest are false. (Buddhists say that all views are false in the sense that "clinging" to any view as incontrovertibly true, universally, holds you back from realizing higher levels of reality. I disagree: I think some facts are true and will always and everywhere be true, like, perhaps, 'fire is hotter than ice', and I think that over the course of our evolution we'll see these facts as more and more beautiful in relation to the rest of reality. I think the Buddhists have many great ideas, but their nominalism is a mistake.)

Chapter IV

Over-Beliefs, Underlying-Beliefs, and the Logic of Believing in God

§1. Over-Beliefs, Underlying-Beliefs

> But high-flying speculations like those of either dogmatic or idealistic theology, [...] These speculations must, it seems to me, be classed as over-beliefs, buildings-out performed by the intellect into directions of which feeling originally supplied the hint.
>
> –William James, in The Varieties of Religious Experience, Lecture XVIII.

An over-belief is a mindset adopted in order to act, whether mentally or physically, in accord with what one's instincts say is true when that truth is so vague that it can't be clearly expressed. It's an overly precise rendering—and as a result, a caricature—of an object that is inherently vague. It serves the purpose of (1) being more readily brought to the forefront of the mind than the underlying belief, and (2) being more easily taught to children than the underlying belief.

The over-belief is (imperfectly) analogous to this: a way to relax is to imagine that hot, but not too hot, water is being poured on your shoulders. Actually believing it is more effective than merely imagining it. The object of belief is that hot water is being poured on your shoulders; that's obviously false, but believing it's true helps you to live in accord with the truth that your instincts insist upon, viz., that you should relax. The analogy fails on the point that "you should relax" is also definable, so a better analogy would be to some vaguer (harder-to-define) truth.

A belief is defined by pragmatists as a habit of mental or physical action with which at least one part of the believer's mind consents. That is, a belief in x is a self-approved habit of acting as if x were true. The underlying beliefs of religion are very vague and not explicable except with the vaguest terms. The problem is that the religious believer needs to regularly practice these underlying beliefs in order to get the vital benefits of them, but, because these beliefs are so vague, the believers would have a hard time maintaining this practice without having over-beliefs which can be readily remembered and easily taught to their youth.

The loftiest things in life are the vaguest. Some other vague objects of belief are love, beauty, and justice. These can only be defined using other vague terms. The vaguest of beliefs which everyone believes is the belief in reality. Reality has no genus or differentia,

so, whereas every other thing is understood by the effects it has on things, and that understanding is brought to light by how its effects differ from other things' effects, the understanding of reality cannot be gotten that way. There's nothing outside of reality to be affected by reality. We know reality is here, we know some things in it, and we think of it as the sum of all things; that's it. The opposite of 'vague' is 'definite' or 'well-defined'. A triangle is defined quite well as a figure composed of three straight lines which, two by two, extend to and meet at three points thus making the three angles by which it gets its name.

The vital benefits of practicing the underlying beliefs of religion include becoming a better person by consistently aspiring toward the ideal of perfection, and having a strong sense of overall purpose and hope, both of which positively affect mental and physical health.

C. S. Peirce explained the vagueness of the object of the underlying belief.

> So, then, the question being whether I believe in the reality of God, I answer, yes. I further opine that pretty nearly everybody more or less believes this, including many of the scientific men of my generation who are accustomed to think the belief is entirely unfounded. The reason they fall into this extraordinary error about their own belief is that they precide (or render precise) the conception, and, in doing so, inevitably change it; and such precise conception is easily shown not to be warranted, even if it cannot be quite refuted. Every concept that is vague is liable to be self-contradictory in those respects in which it is vague. No concept, not even those of mathematics, is absolutely precise; and some of the most important for everyday use are extremely vague. Nevertheless, our instinctive beliefs involving such concepts are far more trustworthy than the best established results of science, if these be precisely understood. For instance, we all think that there is an element of order in the universe. Could any laboratory experiments render that proposition more certain than instinct or common sense leaves it? It is ridiculous to broach such a question. But when anyone undertakes to say precisely what that order consists in, he will quickly find he outruns all logical warrant. Men who are given to defining too much inevitably run themselves into confusion in dealing with the vague concepts of common sense. CP 6:496

§2. The Logic of Believing in God

William James, in the preface to The Meaning of Truth, defined ‘God’ as follows:

> My treatment of ’God,’ ’freedom,’ and ’design’ was similar. Reducing, by the pragmatic test, the meaning of each of these concepts to its positive experienceable operation, I showed them all to mean the same thing, viz., the presence of ’promise’ in the world. ’God or no God?’ means ’promise or no promise?’

Promise is the objective aspect of hope; hope is the subjective aspect of promise. I sometimes prefer to express the object of the underlying religious-belief as “the ultimate Reason for hope.” By “Reason” I mean something akin to Aristotle’s ‘final cause’ as it applies to reality in general. A final cause is either a purpose or a law which pulls nature, in its domain, toward a specific state. The specificity of that state might be very general, i.e., allowing for various outcomes within a specific outline. I capitalized ‘Reason’ because it pertains to the whole of reality. By “ultimate” I mean ‘that which proves true at the infinite limit of investigation over the totality of space and time.’

Every logical, or reasonable, thought is driven by a hope for some good. Even if you know an evil event is inevitable, if you want to know it, you want to know because you hope to gain something good from that knowledge. Every thought starts with a hypothesis (which is a guess or assumption), and the thought continues with a combination of deductions (which are the drawings of necessary consequences) and inductions (which are the testing of the hypothesis directly and also the testing of its necessary consequences, both against what is already known about nature and against what is currently being discovered). The hypothesis that a subset of reality is hopeless is nonetheless a useful hypothesis because if it’s true it means that what is hopeful is in what’s outside of that subset. For example, if you want to get to the other side of a brick wall, hoping that you can walk through it will prove to be useless; the fact that it’s been proven hopeless is a good thing, so you can look for another way to the other side, which is congruent with reality, or you can adjust your goal. On the other hand, a hypothesis that all of reality is hopeless is an utterly useless hypothesis, and as such it’s forbidden by logic. With hope being the basis of logic, it’s a violation of logical reasoning to bet against hope in its most general state. So, the reasonable hypothesis is that there is hope overall and in the long run; the hypothesis that there is no hope overall and in the long run is illogical. Since ‘the ultimate Reason for hope’ or ‘the promise of ultimate goodness’ can be called ‘God’, it’s reasonable to believe in God and it’s unreasonable to believe God is not real.

Since logic is the mode in which we think, and it's driven by hope, not pessimism, our guess as to whether reality is ultimately good or not should not contain any pessimism. It "should not" because to be pessimistic toward the universe is to cave in to hopelessness. Such a conclusion is worse than worthless. You might respond, "There's nothing to compare the universe with, so its character is not a matter of which logic can inform us. Good only has meaning relative to bad, but there's nothing that's 'other than the universe' which can offer the contrast necessary for us to characterize the universe." My response is that the formal possibilities of this are as follows: (1) the universe is good, (2) the universe is bad, (3) the universe just is, and (4) the term "universe" is meaningless. Number 4 is wrong: the universe is the most vague object, so it evades almost all characterizations, but you just characterized it as a sui generis existence so that's one characteristic. Also, as you'll see in §4 of this chapter, all conceptions are necessarily anthropomorphic: this is a key for validating characterizations from a purely intrinsic frame of reference. Number 3 is a Cartesian assumption whose implications bar the possibility of a subject having knowledge of the universe as an object, so it is rejected. See the next section which is on the Cartesian problem and pragmatist solution. Number 2 is a violation of the spirit of thinking. Number 1 is in line with the spirit of thinking. By process of elimination, granting that I've identified all the formal possibilities, number 1 true: the universe is good.

§3. The Cartesian Problem and the Pragmatist Solution

The Problem with Cartesianism

If 'objective reality' is such that the object of inquiry is absolutely separate from the belief of the inquirer, then the object cannot affect the inquirer, and therefore the inquirer cannot possibly come to a true belief about the object. This was a big problem that René Descartes left the philosophical world. For anyone, i.e., any subject, to learn about an object, the object must affect the subject, directly or indirectly. When one thing affects another thing, the two things are not separate in all ways, but rather, they must be similar at least in the way in which they're causally linked.

The Pragmatists' Solution

Objective truth and subjective belief are not absolutely separate, nor are the physical and mental realms. According to C. S. Peirce, truth is not absolutely separate from belief, but rather, truth is belief which would be held at the infinite limit of inquiry; belief at the infinite limit of inquiry is truth. (Cartesianists believe that some truth would still elude the inquirer even at the infinite limit; this makes them anti-pragmatists.) This pragmatist definition ties inquirers with the truth (and, hence, the subject with the object) albeit at

an infinite distance. We don't, however, need to complete the infinity to gain true belief. During our inquiry, but before hitting upon the truth, we recognize that we're getting closer to the truth due to our ability to recognize that, over time and effort inquiring, our trajectory of revised beliefs in regard to the object is homing in on the truth—which we recognize by the increasing efficacy of the revised beliefs. From this 'narrowing down' we are able to better guess what is actually true after some finite time and effort inquiring. Once we guess the truth and then repeatedly test that belief in the real world, we will recognize the fact that this belief is repeatedly being affirmed by its repeated efficacy.

{{{ A thing's being is intrinsically connected to your mind, however indirectly. At this point, I need to explain the fact-value interconnection. In lieu of that explanation, see Hilary Putnam's excellent article, Beyond the Fact/Value Dichotomy. https://inters.org/Putnam-Fact-Value Then I need to explain how it follows that logic is a species of ethics, and ethics is a species of aesthetics. Logic is the science of truth and falsity. Ethics is the science of what should and shouldn't be done. Aesthetics is the science of what's beautiful and admirable, and what's ugly and repulsive. What's true is true because it's what should be believed. What should be done is what's most beautiful, all things considered. }}}

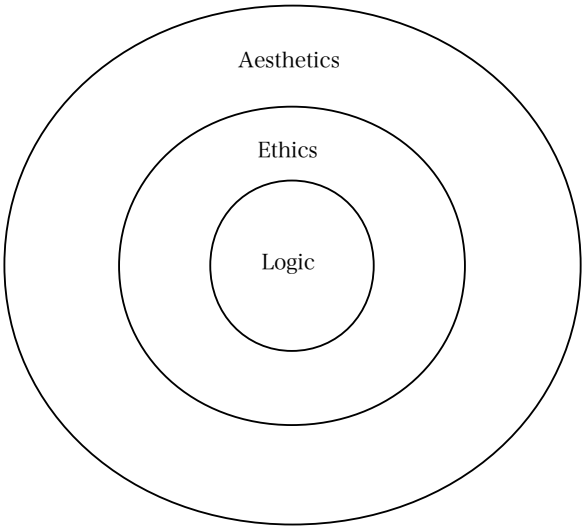

Fig. 1. An Euler diagram showing the relations between aesthetics, ethics, and logic.

So, consider (3) from above, viz., "the universe just is," i.e., it is without any aesthetic value. Everything that is, that has being, has aesthetic value because it's connected with our minds.

§4. The Inescapability of Anthropomorphic Conceptions

Charles Peirce, in the Collected Papers, 1:316:

> I hear you say 'This smacks too much of an anthropomorphic conception.' I reply that every scientific explanation of a natural phenomenon is a hypothesis that there is something in nature to which human reason is analogous; and that it really is so all the successes of science in its applications to human convenience are witnesses. They proclaim that truth over the length and breadth of the modern world. In light of the successes of science to my mind there is a degree of baseness in denying our birthright as children of God and in shamefacedly slinking away from anthropomorphic conceptions of the universe.

Peirce, in the Collected Papers 8.168:

> Many are beginning to feel that the only possible justification for a hypothesis is that it renders the facts comprehensible, and that to suppose them absolutely incomprehensible (which is what the doctrine of the Unknowable comes to) is not rendering them comprehensible." ... "To the same general tendency belongs an opinion, now very common, that it is unscientific to inquire whether there be a God; the only rational question being what sort of God there is. With this is naturally associated the further opinion that instead of its being shallow philosophy to suppose an 'anthropomorphic' God, if by 'anthropomorphic' be meant mental, it is far more consonant with the method of science to formulate the problem by asking what sort of mind God is; and if we cannot in some measure understand God's mind, all science it is said with some color of justice, must be a delusion and a snare.

William James, in The Varieties of Religious Experience, Lecture XX, Conclusions:

> [T]he theologians contention that the religious man is moved by an external power is vindicated, for it is one of the peculiarities of invasions from the subconscious region to take on objective appearances, and to suggest to the Subject an external control. In the religious life the control is felt as 'higher'; but since on our hypothesis it is primarily the higher faculties of our own hidden mind which are controlling, the sense of union with the power beyond us is a sense of something, not merely apparently, but literally true.

Peirce was bothered by Immanuel Kant's idea of a thing-in-itself, i.e., of a thing that underlies the effects of the thing. It struck him as wrong-headed.

Here's Immanuel Kant, in the 2nd Preface to his Critique of Pure Reason:

> At the same time, it must be carefully borne in mind that, while we surrender the power of cognizing [things in themselves], we still reserve the power of thinking objects, as things in themselves. For otherwise, we should require to affirm the existence of an appearance, without something that appears—which would be absurd.

Peirce, in his essay, counters Kant's idea with his pragmatic maxim, in How to Make Our Ideas Clear:

> Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object.

A bit further down, Peirce wrote the following.

> Whether we ought to say that a force is an acceleration, or that it causes an acceleration, is a mere question of propriety of language, which has no more to do with our real meaning than the difference between the French idiom 'Il fait froid' and its English equivalent 'It is cold.' Yet it is surprising to see how this simple affair has muddled men's minds. In how many profound treatises is not force spoken of as a 'mysterious entity,' which seems to be only a way of confessing that the author despairs of ever getting a clear notion of what the word means! In a recent admired work on 'Analytic Mechanics' it is stated that we understand precisely the effect of force, but what force itself is we do not understand! This is simply a self-contradiction. The idea which the word force excites in our mind has no other function than to affect our actions, and these actions can have no reference to force otherwise than through its effects. Consequently, if we know what the effects of force are, we are acquainted with every fact which is implied in saying that a force exists, and there is nothing more to know.

A person’s understanding of an object can only be what he conceives as the object’s possible effects on him. An effect may come directly from the object, e.g., sunlight glaring in your eyes, or it may come indirectly, e.g., sunlight causing your child’s pupils to contract, which you, indoors, see right after he comes inside to see you. A person cannot conceive of something that is so remote from himself that it could have no effect,

however indirect, or however slight, on him. Furthermore, the idea of a thing which could theoretically never affect you is a vacuous idea. If something is real, it has a potential to affect you, however indirectly, and that gives you the possibility to understand it in some measure. That potential and possibility may not be practically realizable in your short life, but it is theoretically possible, e.g., if you evolve enough you'll eventually reach a point where your powers of perception are acute and sensitive enough for you to sense the effect. (Perhaps this example is not purely theoretical; perhaps your soul actually evolves into the evermore, affording you ever increasing knowledge.)

Every effect is only understood by how it affects the person who is understanding it. You understand how an effect affects other things, but you only understand how it affects other things by how its effects on those things affect you. Therefore, all conceptions are self-referential. Because any man's understanding of anything is largely dependent on his interactions with the community of mankind, the term, anthropomorphic, was used. C. S. Peirce defined the philosophical use of 'anthropomorphism', in the Century Dictionary, as follows:

> In pragmatistic philos., that philosophic tendency which, recognizing an absolute impossibility in the attainment by man of any conception that does not refer to human life, proposes frankly to submit to this as a decree of experience and to shape metaphysics to agreement with it. The term was first used in this sense by F. C. S. Schiller (Riddles of the Sphinx).

Because an object is wholly understood by the effects of the objects, the term "God" means 'the effects of God'. These effects constitute the whole of reality. When we learn about any part of reality, we learn about God.

§5. Recapitulation and Conclusion.

(1) Reality is a continuum; nothing that's real is absolutely cut off from anything else.

(2) There are real possibilities. For example, after I flip a coin and it shows heads, it was nonetheless true that before the toss tails was a real possibility. Theoretical truths are on the continuum of reality.

(3) The objective truth of reality is connected to the subjective mind at the infinite limit of inquiry; the theoretical ideal of belief at the infinite limit of inquiry is truth; and before that limit a mind can recognize when it's homing in on the truth.

(4) Inquiry is driven, in part, by the hope to settle one's thoughts on the matter into a good and beautiful habit of thinking about the matter. The other part driving inquiry is the hope that the search for the truth or the answer will invigorate the spirit. Inquiry, and therefore logic, is nothing without hope.

(5) A habit can't be permanently settled if it's not as good and beautiful as theoretically possible; the mind cannot permanently rest on any amount of badness or ugliness because they agitate the mind to search for a better solution.

Therefore, it is perfectly logical to believe that there is a Reason for hoping in a general and ultimate good; it's illogical to believe that there is no Reason to hope for a general and ultimate good. Again, to believe that a subset of reality is hopeless is still good because it tells you where the good is; to believe that the universe, in its totality, is ultimately neutral or bad, is useless, and as such it's illogical.

If 'God' can be defined as 'the ultimate Promise' or 'the ultimate reason for general hope', and if we accept the postulate that logical thinking involves hope (which, I think, paves the way for the standard postulates of logic (enumerated in ch. 1 of John Venn's book, The Principles of Inductive Logic)), and we accept that the universe can be characterized at all, then it's an inescapable, logical conclusion that God is real.

§6. My Opinion on the Matter

When someone says "There is no God," I'm instinctively offended, because I understand that person as saying "There is no ultimate reason for hope, but there is an ultimate reason for despair."

If someone says to me, "a cargo airplane is not a god, nor is or was the man called Jesus", I'm not automatically offended, but I'm ready to defend both beliefs, as they are or were genuinely practiced, for their value as over-beliefs which cover the appropriate responses to the object of the more important underlying beliefs. By genuinely practicing even the most ridiculous over-beliefs, the believer draws on a real source of ultimate hope; and that habit of drawing is that person's underlying belief whether he can verbally articulate any knowledge of the object of that underlying belief or not. I think it's cruel to attempt to pull that rug out from underneath someone without knowing that he'll have another but more secure rug (over-belief) to stand on (to connect him to the real source.) If the person who attacks another person's over-belief had the goal or effect of disconnecting that someone from his source of ultimate hope, then I'm instinctively offended. If it's the attacker's goal, he's Satanic; if it's his effect but not his goal, he's Satan's useful idiot. (I define 'Satan' as the Reason for despair.)

Despite the fact that your life is short, reality is continuous, so you are connected to the infinite future. Just as a die loaded to show ‘six’ will show infinitely more sixes than any other number in the long-run of throws, reality in the infinite future is infinitely good. You’re connected with that goodness.

Chapter V

Peirce's Cosmology, with My Adjustments

Order in our universe is on a hyperbolic path from mostly chaos to mostly order. Order is more fleeting the farther back you look, and it's more established the farther into the future you look. One asymptote is absolute chaos, and the other asymptote is absolute order. The hyperbola never reaches either asymptote, so there is no absolute beginning or end to our universe, but there is an evolution of order out of chaos. This hyperbolic path is not perfectly smooth; it has perturbations, but on the whole it's hyperbolic.

An ordered part of the universe is a habit developed by the universe. There was always a tendency of the chaotic parts of the universe to join with the ordered parts, shrinking chaos's realm. In the early days, these creations would be small and fleeting, but as time continued these creatures would have larger and longer lives. Today, the universe has many habits that are relatively well established. Physical matter is deeply ingrained habit. The mental world, on the other hand, is fairly established relative to chaos, but relative to physical matter it's restless, and so, inquisitive; mental activity is flighty, and more susceptible to being disoriented by its encounters with the randomness of the world. A mind is a segment of the universe that's swimming in a more or less chaotic world looking for a suitable belief in which to settle. A mind is subject to deception by chance, but it uses chance to both broaden its horizons and to use the perceived long-run trajectories of chance to help it answer questions, e.g., taking random samples for an inductive inference. The difference between mind and matter is the relative stability of the habit. Matter is mind that stopped changing its mind, and stopped being creative.

I believe that the grand trajectory of the universe is toward its ideal state. In a letter to Christine Ladd-Franklin, Charles Sanders Peirce said "The state of things in the infinite past is chaos, tohu bohu, the nothingness of which consists in the total absence of regularity. The state of things in the infinite future is death, and nothingness of which consists in the complete triumph of law and absence of our spontaneity." A trajectory toward death is not very optimistic. Since the impetus for all thought is hope, I think the best conclusion about the universe as a whole is the most optimistic one. This reasoning is rational when applied to thought about the universe as a whole: a pessimistic conclusion about the whole universe is utterly worthless and completely ugly; but, it's often useful to come to a pessimistic conclusion about some subset of the universe, e.g., whether you can walk through a wall. I think the ideal state of the universe is one where the balance of order and chance yields the most beauty, and beauty cannot be appreciated except by a creative mind. I think of the universe as a dance, the pas de deux of Ananke and Tyche.

Logic is a species of ethics, and ethics is a species of aesthetics. Logic is the science of truth and falsity. Ethics is the science of what should and shouldn't be done. Aesthetics is the science of what's beautiful and admirable, and what's ugly and repulsive. What's true is true because it's what should be believed. What should be done is what's most beautiful, all things considered. Even so-called ugly facts are more beautiful than their denial if they're understood from the perspective of the infinitely wise community. Truth is always more elegant than falsity because of the fact that truth is coherent with all other truths. Falsity is incoherent with all other truths, and there could never be a world of nothing but falseness that is coherent. Furthermore, truth propels us toward a better reality: beautiful truths inspire us to create more beauty, and ugly truths propel us to remediate the ugliness and replace it with beauty. For example, it's a fact—a horrible fact—that some innocent child was murdered recently. This fact, when believed by our community, propels us to do good acts we otherwise wouldn't do, and thus it propels us to reach toward heights of beauty which we otherwise wouldn't attain. Consider where we stand, today, in the evolution of feelings. Eons ago, feelings were duller and so evil had less of a bad effect, but also, goodness had less of a rewarding effect. Eons from now, feelings will be much more sensitive, so the rewards of goodness will be more fully appreciated. We'll have eaten the fruit from the tree of knowledge-of-good-and-evil and so we'll understand more fully why we should not do evil things. Doing the slightest evil in that future time will be felt and understood to be like, today, stabbing your own leg with a knife right before what you would otherwise expect to be your happiest, most fulfilling moment. Good acts will be more fully appreciated, and this fact will propel us even further to doing good. In that future we will be in bliss—not in ignorant bliss, though, but a very-aware bliss. So, truth is what should be believed because it's what will propel us toward a more beautiful future. Falseness is what shouldn't be believed because it's what will impede our evolution toward a more beautiful future.

The telos of the universe is the ideal of perfect beauty, elegance, and admirableness which calls us forward from the infinite limit of the future. The universe will always reach toward aesthetic goodness, whether it be mathematically, logically, physically, musically, interpersonally, etc., all of which will be harmonized in ever more beautiful ways.

Chapter VI

The Afterlife. A Hypothesis

On the timeline, the present is a mere point on the line, and as such it has no length. The past is the line before that point; the future is the line after that point.

The past is what is remembered and what would be inferred about the past if given unlimited time and resources for investigation.

The future is what would be inferred about the future if given unlimited resources for investigation, plus the pure-chance occurrences which can't be predicted, e.g., the result of your next coin toss.

What we call the present is really the immediate past, where the memory is still vivid and inference is highly reliable, plus the highly reliable inferences of the immediate-future.

You are nothing but a memory, inference at its theoretically highest potential, and a set of probabilities. Your sense of experiencing, which includes awareness and feelings, is a part of your vivid memory and inference of your immediate past and future. (Your knowledge of yourself is nothing but your memory and your actual, as opposed to theoretically potential, inferences, including inferences of the limits of those probabilities.)

Consciousness and intelligence in the universe has been evolving such that the power of both memory and inference has been increasing. Therefore, the ongoing understanding of the present has been including more and more of the past with farther and farther reaches into the future.

There will come a time, long after our deaths, when highly evolved, conscious, and intelligent beings, made from recombined parts of the material we were made of, will be able to infer and remember our lives with as much clarity, vividness, and definiteness as we can presently know and feel our present lives. Since they'll be made of our material and material affected by our material, their knowledge of us will also contain memory. These beings will literally resurrect us with their memory of us, inferences pertaining to us, and understanding of probabilities pertaining to us. At that time, each person will become fully alive (i.e., as alive as he was in his previous life) in a highly evolved world as a being with all the habits he had established for himself in the previous world. Evil habits won't be rewarded as they sometimes were in his former world, but out of habit

he'll continue them and suffer very harsh consequences. For people who have established an attitude of unrepentance, their new life will be Hell. For those who were evil but didn't want to be, they will have a harsh start, but they'll adjust. Those who dedicated their life to doing good will be rewarded the most quickly. But, everyone will be disoriented at first. Once the adjustment to the new world is made, your evolution, and the world's evolution will continue forever toward more wonderful living. This is Heaven.

At present, each dead person is remembered to some extent, and he is alive to that extent, albeit that extent is a far cry from what it was when he was commonly considered "alive". These memories do fade, and so the dead person's vague life fades. But, over the evolution of consciousness and intelligence in the universe, there will come a point in time where memory and understanding of him will begin to grow, in fact, it will be parts of him re-used by the future beings that will be remembering him. When the memory plus understanding of him by the future beings reaches the clarity, vividness, and definiteness as we presently know and feel our present lives, he will be fully resurrected and as in control of his life as he was in his former life.

As the universe evolves beyond this point of "full resurrection," the clarity, vividness, definiteness, and feelings of everything will increase. And so, the appreciation of goodness and repulsion of evil will increase. Goodness will increase and evil will decrease.

I doubt that the first highly evolved beings, who will remember, i.e., awaken, the beings of history, will be humans or the direct descendants of humans. In the evolutionary race to reach this singularity of intelligence, humans are like the hare in the race of the tortoise and the hare. So far, our great abilities are being squandered by selfishness and arrogance. The more I look into the history of science, neverminding the horrible history of politics, the more I lose hope for human evolution. I have more hope that the mice will first reach it, but maybe we'll have to wait for the cockroaches. But if cockroaches fail, the tardigrades won't fail us! In any case, God's will doesn't depend on any finite subset of reality to become fulfilled.

From the frame of reference of the living, after a person dies, many many years will pass before he is resurrected with the clarity, vividness, and definiteness we feel now. But, from his own frame of reference he will be resurrected fairly quickly afterwards. This is analogous to a particle traveling a large distance through space at a speed near the speed of light: from our frame of reference it takes many years, but from its frame of reference, only a few days pass.

My hypothesis for the afterlife is not merely one arbitrary possibility out of infinity, but, in its spirit, it represents the most optimistic future possible for all beings in the long run. If there's an even more optimistic hypothesis, I'd go with that.

_____ The End _____